

ON FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS
APPLY~~TOP SECRET SENSITIVE~~HAIG
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1972 OCT 21 AM 9 40

~~TOP SECRET~~ 211107Z OCT 72 SENSITIVE EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY
VIA BUNKER CHANNELSTO: WHITE HOUSE, GENERAL HAIG FLASH
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER SAIGON 0206
HAKTO 028

MORI/CDF C05148220

1. I AM SENDING YOU THIS MESSAGE ON A CONTINGENCY BASIS TO BRING YOU UP TO DATE ON THE SITUATION HERE AND TO GET YOUR OPINION ON WHAT OUR PLANNING SHOULD NOW BE. YOU ALREADY HAVE MY VIEWS REGARDING THE FINAL LEG OF THE TRIP. NOW LET ME PUT THE ISSUES IN A MORE GENERAL CONTEXT IN LIGHT OF TODAY'S EVENTS. AFTER READING THIS AND MY EARLIER MESSAGE PLEASE FLASH ME BACK YOUR VIEWS.
2. SITUATION HERE IS AS FOLLOWS: I HAD FOUR HOUR MEETING WITH A GVN WORKING PARTY HEADED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER. THIS WAS TO BE FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER MEETING WITH THIEU AND THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL AT 1400. I HAD ALSO REQUESTED A PRIVATE MEETING WITH THIEU IMMEDIATELY AFTER THAT SESSION AND INFORMED HIM THAT THE ADDITIONAL MILITARY EQUIPMENT WAS MOVING.
3. THE MEETING THIS MORNING WAS EXTREMELY WELL TEMPERED. THE GVN PROPOSED 23 CHANGES IN THE DRAFT AGREEMENT, AND WE ACCEPTED 16 OF THEM, MANY OF THEM MINOR AND PROBABLY MANAGEABLE. THE 7 UNACCEPTABLE CHANGES, HOWEVER, CONCERNED THEIR MORE BASIC PROBLEMS WITH RESPECT TO NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES AND THE POLITICAL PROVISIONS. THEY WANTED TO WRITE INTO THE AGREEMENT SPECIFIC PROVISIONS REGARDING THE WITHDRAWAL OF NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES BY NAME. IN THE POLITICAL SECTION THEY WISHED TO EMASCULATE PARAGRAPH 9(G) AND DROP PARAGRAPH 9(H), WHICH AS YOU WILL RECOGNIZE WOULD RESULT IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY REAL POLITICAL SECTION AT ALL. I EXPLAINED THAT NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES IN THE SOUTH, ALREADY WEAKENED AND DEPRIVED OF REINFORCEMENT, COULD NOT BUT WITHER AWAY, A POINT THAT ABRAMS MADE YESTERDAY AS WELL. ON THE POLITICAL SIDE I EXPLAINED THAT THE SPECIFICITY WITH REGARD TO THE COUNCIL UNDERLINED ITS ESSENTIAL ABSURDITY AND THUS WAS A PROTECTION RATHER THAN A HANDICAP FOR THE GVN. THE MEETING ENDED ON A CORDIAL NOTG.
4. NEVERTHELESS THE MEETING WITH THIEU WAS FIRST MOVED FROM 1400 TO 1700 AND HAS NOW BEEN CANCELLED ALTOGETHER. NOBODY AT THE PALACE ANSWERS CALLS FROM BUNKER, THE LINE BEING THAT NHA HAS LEFT AND CANNOT BE REACHED. A FAMILIAR PATTERN IS BEGINNING TO EMERGE. THIS PUTS US INTO AN ENORMOUSLY PRECARIOUS POSITION. IF HANOI CAVES AGAIN ON OUR LATEST MESSAGE AND I THEN REFUSE TO MAKE THE TRIP, THEY WILL CLEARLY KNOW WHAT THE DIFFICULTY IS. THEY WOULD THEN HAVE EVERY INCENTIVE TO GO PUBLIC AND DEMAND THAT WE SIGN A SETTLEMENT TO WHICH WE HAVE ALREADY AGREED. THEY WOULD BE TRYING TO LOCK US FOR THE POST-ELECTION PERIOD, PROBABLY GIVE MCGOVERN A LAST-MINUTE SHOT AND FINISH OFF THIEU.
5. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT WE HAVE THREE BASIC POSSIBILITIES. FIRST THERE IS THE CHANCE THAT HANOI WILL TURN US DOWN ON THE BASIS OF OUR LATEST MESSAGE. IF THEY DID NOT MAKE A FINAL BREAK WE COULD TRY TO NURSE THE NEGOTIATIONS ALONG AND GET THIEU ABOARD UNDER A LESS FRENZIED SCHEDULE.

SECONDLY, WE COULD PROCEED WITH THE GAME PLAN FROM MY LAST CABLE, I.E. GO AHEAD WITH THE TRIP AND TRY TO GET SUFFICIENT CHANGES TO MAKE THE AGREEMENT ACCEPTABLE TO THE GVN.

THIRD, I COULD LEAVE HERE AND RETURN DIRECTLY TO WASHINGTON. I WOULD DO SO NO LATER THAN MONDAY. UNDER THIS OPTION, YOU WOULD IN THE MEANTIME GET IN TOUCH WITH THE SOVIETS AND CHINESE WITH THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE. YOU WOULD EXPLAIN TO THEM THAT WE ARE VERY NEAR AGREEMENT BUT THERE ARE A FEW ISSUES SUCH AS OUR PRISONERS IN LAOS AND CAMBODIA, THE PRESENCE OF NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES IN OTHER COUNTRIES, AND THE TIMING OF THE CEASEFIRE WHICH CONSULTATIONS HAVE CONVINCED US CANNOT BE SOLVED IMMEDIATELY. HOWEVER, WE ARE DETERMINED TO BRING THEM TO AS RAPID A CONCLUSION AS POSSIBLE. WE WOULD ASSURE HANOI, AND REINFORCE THIS UNDERTAKING VIS-;--VIS CHOU AND BREZHNEV, THAT WE WOULD COMPLETE AN AGREEMENT DURING THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER. I WOULD BE PREPARED TO MEET WITH LE DUC THO ANY TIME DURING THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 30 TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS WHICH SHOULD NOT BE TOO COMPLEX. TO SHOW OUR GOOD WILL WE WOULD FURTHER REDUCE THE BOMBING OF NORTH VIETNAM -- I HAVE IN MIND ABOUT 100 SORTIES AND NO B-52 RAIDS.

UNDER THIS APPROACH WE WOULD UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES PLEAD THIEU AS AN OBSTACLE BECAUSE THIS WOULD GIVE HANOI THE MAXIMUM INCENTIVE TO GO PUBLIC. IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR US TO TAKE THE RAP, PAINFUL AS IT IS. //

6. I HAVE REQUESTED AN APPOINTMENT WITH THIEU THIS EVENING TO DETERMINE HIS INTENTIONS. CLEARLY WE CANNOT WAIT MUCH LONGER TO MAKE OUR CHOICE SINCE WE ARE RAPIDLY BECOMING PRISONER OF EVENTS. IN RETROSPECT, IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT I MADE A MISTAKE IN AGREEING TO A FIXED DATE FOR THE FINAL LEG. DOING SO GOT US MORE CONCESSIONS THAN ANY OF US THOUGHT POSSIBLE, BUT IT IS CLEARLY MAKING US PAY AT THIS END. THAT IS WATER OVER THE DAM. I THINK WHEN YOU READ THE RECORDS OF OUR TALKS HERE YOU WILL FIND THAT WE HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY RATHER WITH THIEU. IN OUR MEETINGS SO FAR, AS I HAVE REPORTED,

GOOD HAS NOT BEEN ONE OF CONFRONTATION. ALSO WHEN I TOLD THIEU ABOUT THE POSSIBLE VIENTIANE AND FINAL LEG PROSPECTS HE DID NOT OBJECT AND INDEED PRETENDED TO WELCOME THEM.

7. AS USUAL I AM COUNTING ON YOUR STEADINESS BACK THERE TO KEEP EVERYONE CALM. THIS IS AS COMPLEX A SITUATION AS WE HAVE FACED DURING THESE FOUR YEARS. WE CANNOT ALLOW JUDGMENTS NOW TO BE PANICKED BY ELECTORAL CONSIDERATIONS. I LOOK FORWARD URGENTLY TO YOUR VIEWS. //

8. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS, I.E. HANOI'S APPARENT PUBLICIZING OF OUR AGREEMENT THROUGH A DE BORCHGRAVE ARTICLE, HAVE OVERT

KEN THIS MESSAGE, BUT I AM SENDING IT ALONG ANYWAY AS A USEFUL SUMMARY. ANOTHER MESSAGE FOLLOWS.
WARM REGARDS.

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

YES ONLY